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CHURCH EFFICIENCY

Some Church Statistics for 1916

The *Christian Work*, March 3, has compiled some interesting statistics, based on the Yearbook of the Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America for 1917. The religious bodies, including Catholic, Protestant, and Eastern Orthodox, had in 1916 an aggregate of over 40,000,000 communicants. The net increase of the year was 747,000, or 204,000 more than the increase of 1915. In 1890 the total religious strength was 20,618,000, so that in the twenty-six years following the net increase has been 19,399,000, or 94 per cent, while the gain of the population of the country has been about 61 per cent. During the year 1916 the gains of the Protestant bodies were more than double the gains of the Roman Catholic body, the former having added some 500,000 and the latter about 216,000 members. Among the Protestant bodies, 136,000 are accredited to the Methodists, 132,000 to the Baptists, and 79,000 to the Presbyterian and Reformed groups. The Episcopal church had a gain of 27,000, and the Lutheran bodies a gain of 20,000. Owing to an extraordinary revision the returns of the Disciples of Christ show a loss of about 185,000. The thirty constituent bodies of the Federal Council report a total of 17,996,000 communicants, a gain in 1916 of about 254,000.

The National Temperance Society Unites with the Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America

The National Temperance Society, which is one of the oldest organizations of its kind in the United States, is henceforth to act in conjunction with the Commission on Temperance appointed by the Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America. This move toward centralization is in accord with the movements which seem

to be more or less common to denominational organization. The Congregationalists, Methodists, and Baptists have initiated a movement to consolidate their church organizations. The *Presbyterian*, March 23, has announced that an overture is about to be made to the General Assembly for the consolidation of the Boards of Home Missions and Freedmen. In the same number of the *Presbyterian* a still more ambitious scheme is recommended, namely, a consolidation of the Boards of Home Missions, Church Erection, Freedmen, and the missionary part of the Board of Publication and Sabbath-school Work. All of which goes to show that efficiency in church organization is increasingly becoming a matter of actuality as well as of theory.

The Religious Social Engineer

In recent years much emphasis has been placed on the technology of social service. Many wholesome contributions have been made to the literature of the subject. Among those of large practical value, especially on the religious side, is *The Social Engineer* by Edwin L. Earp, professor of Christian sociology, Drew Theological Seminary. Much of what he says is very suggestive for those who appreciate the need of church efficiency. It is held that on its ethical side the present-day movement for social service does not differ very much in aim from other religious movements. It does differ vitally in points of emphasis and methods. Furthermore, the salvation of the social order depends very much on the efficiency with which the church does its work. To this end every minister must be as far as possible an efficient social worker. But he must have also more and more both the advice and the assistance of a skilled expert who may be designated the social engineer. This specialist is to be the organizer and the director of the social

machinery of the community, or the church.

There is much machinery, there are many workers, there is considerable knowledge of the forces available for achievement; but the one great need is someone who can keep others at work with the machinery, who can evaluate all of the forces and interests involved, and who can relate them without social friction. In industry, in religion, in philanthropy, in medical practice, and in the ever-increasing fields of charities and corrections, social service has taken on multiplied technical forms. Modern industry requires the services of a practical engineer. A great construction company may need men who can manage the technique of planning a structure and of judging materials. It must have also a practical engineer who can keep men at work in the right place and at the right time. There are in the church some good leaders who know the technique of organization. There are others who are able and willing to finance church enterprises. But we lack the practical social engineer who can organize and keep at work the whole constituency of the church.

This new type of minister or social worker must be developed for the needs of the whole community. He must be expert in relating men and women of the church and the community to civic life. There must be another for the Sunday school, another for the country problem, another for the foreign problems of the community. For such a work those are needed who are seeking, not a place of honor as is the case too often, but a place to serve. They must know the value of social machinery, must know how to run it, and withal must have a will to stay at the task.

The Minister's Pension Fund of the Episcopal Church

Under the direction of William Lawrence, of the Protestant Episcopal diocese of Massachusetts, \$6,500,000 have been sub-

scribed for accrued liabilities to the clergy of the Episcopal church. The old idea of a pension fund which connotes charity has been left behind, and the payments really will be instalments on a deferred salary. The campaign has been under way for fifteen months. The sum pledged has reached \$6,500,000. The clergy provided for number 5,800. The present average salary is \$1,200. The minimum retiring annuity will be \$600, the minimum disability annuity, \$600, the widow's minimum annuity, \$300.

It is only fair to say that that "financial feat" was not limited to fifteen months of activity. Six years ago a thorough investigation of the clergy was started, and the plans of the pension fund have been based on the findings of that investigation, which provided data respecting 74 per cent of the clergy. Owing to the influence of the impressive facts as to underpayment and distress in old age, counsel was taken with the best expert advisers on pension systems, including President Pritchett, of the Carnegie Foundation, and a questionnaire was prepared covering fully the whole problem of clerical income, expenditure, domestic obligations, etc. The best actuaries of the government at Washington and of the large insurance companies in New York were employed to work out the plan of pensioning. It was early recognized that this was of vital concern to the success of the undertaking, for the civil pension systems of New York City have broken down, and the Carnegie Foundation has already had to revise its basis of operation. The fund has now been voluntarily placed under the supervision of the officials of the Insurance Department of New York state. The fund has been raised with a cost of only 1.75 per cent, and even this sum for overhead charges will be covered by special subscriptions; so that literally the fund starts off with a capital of \$6,500,000. Provision has been made for the future. Hereafter when a parish pays its

rector a salary it will pay to a central fund an additional amount of 7.5 per cent which, held at interest, will produce an annuity at a given age, the same amounting to 1.25 per cent of the average salary of the man multiplied by the number of years of service. No annuity will be less than \$600, and no annuity will amount to more than 50 per cent of the average annual salary received in one or many parishes. Bishop Lawrence thinks that this pension plan is "the best yet devised for any group of men in the United States or any other country." And George Perry Morris, writing on the subject in the *Congregationalist*, March 15, says: "The charity plea is worked out; and any system that does not include the accrued liabilities detail and provide for it in advance is bound to collapse sooner or later."

Prohibition in England

The *British Weekly*, February 15, has an article by Principal James Denney which reflects the working of the English mind with respect to prohibition. Since the war broke out a Central Control Board has been appointed for the specific business of guarding the output of munitions against the inroads of the liquor habit. The appointment of this board is evidence that the government recognized that liquor was interfering largely and dangerously with the production of munitions. On the other hand, the fact that the board was granted only restricted powers while, of its own will, the board has not exercised to the full the powers given it, has rendered the Central Board of Control inadequate for the emergency. Dr. Denney draws attention to the motive which has led to government interference with the liquor trade. Lord Davenport, he says, is almost painfully anxious that no one should regard the cutting of 50 per cent of the nation's beer as a measure of temperance or social reform. This partial prohibition has not been granted out of any consideration of conscience or humanity; it

has been granted out of concern for the submarines. In view of the efficiency motive Dr. Denney recalls the recent campaign to urge saving on the part of the people, when "all the greater and lesser lights shone or twinkled over the national firmament." This saving propaganda was instituted because it was believed that saving was the most urgent need of the hour. Dr. Denney affirms that if saving is the most urgent need of the hour, the most obvious, straightforward, and unquestionable way to save is to shut the "public-house." But, while Dr. Denney believes that efficiency in the national emergency is sufficient to warrant prohibition, he does not think that this motive will carry it through. He thinks that the apathy on the part of those who are guided by this motive is abundant proof that something more is needed. The action which prohibition requires cannot be commanded except by motives which came from the menal world. The writer thinks that England is on trial inasmuch as the liquor trade is seen to imperil the nation's life. The peril of liquor to the material interest is serious, but the real trial is in the sphere of the spiritual. He puts the question thus: "Can we find, in the situation to which our eyes have at last been opened, the moral sense and the menal nerve to do what the will of God and the interest of humanity so urgently demand? The seriousness with which Dr. Denney wrestles with prohibition is indicated by his statement: "No victory over the Germans, even if victory were possible, could compensate for a defeat in which the nation betrayed itself anew to its most cruel and treacherous foe."

The Church and Social Service

In this era of significant transitions there is much confusion as to what is the real function of the church in social service, and along with this the question of the relation of personal religion and social work. Not long ago in an article in the *Methodist Review*, it

Charles A. Ellwood, professor of sociology, University of Missouri, had some things to say that have a vital bearing here.

According to Jesus service to God can consist only in service to humanity. The burden of his message was social. His vision was of a redeemed humanity, a "Kingdom of God." In its redemptive note we find the really distinctive thing about Christianity. It stands for the redemption of the whole man and of all men. Man is both body and soul. His life is a unit. Certainly the church must see that men have proper food and clothing, proper sanitation and medical service, just wages and favorable conditions under which to work. Jesus did not disregard the importance of the material conditions of life. Humanitarian work must be done and every church should be engaged in some form of it. It is not necessary that all such work done by the church shall be done through agencies controlled by the church. If the aims and the methods are right the church can co-operate with any existing philanthropic agency. In fact churches must co-operate with one another first, and then co-operate with other forces to effect an end community-wide in scope.

But the church is more than a philanthropic institution. Ministering to human needs on the material side is but the beginning of humanitarianism if we accept the content of Jesus' teaching. The highest end in religious and social effort is personal character. This can be effected, not by ministering in material things alone, but by ministering to the spirit of man. The bestowal of food and clothing and the like may be at times the surest indirect way of

reaching the higher spiritual needs, yet the church must keep in mind that the significance of ministering in the realm of temporal and physical things is found entirely in its bearing on spiritual ends and spiritual welfare. All of the social-service work of the church should aim ultimately at spiritual results. Only that should be undertaken which is related directly or indirectly to meeting the needs of the spirit. The attainment of sound personal character is the chief end, and in personal character spirit is always the supreme factor.

The social work of the church is redemptive. It should be so in all the things that affect life. It includes the redemption of material conditions. This the church should emphasize more and more. But this is not all. Social service means also to spread knowledge, to propagate right ideals, and to develop character. If all possible favorable physical conditions be established in a community, what will it amount to if vice and crime and low ideals of life run riot among the masses? The germs of typhoid and tuberculosis are deadly, but the germs of sin and vice and crime are more deadly. In the efficient church social-welfare work must include within its scope the morals and the ideals of the people. Right, decent, efficient living comes, not through easy environment, but through right ideals and right desires. The social leadership needed today is leadership in ideals. Unless this work is done by the church, then social work will be a failure in our civilization. This leadership in ideals can be realized most surely by the "preaching of the gospel." In the life and the teaching of Jesus is the power sufficient to redeem both the individual and the community.